

California Department of Public Health Office of AIDS

Access to Sterile Syringes Pharmacist Education Campaign

Alessandra Ross, MPH

Injection Drug Use Specialist



AB 1743 (Ting, Statutes of 2014)

- Permits licensed pharmacies throughout California to **sell or furnish syringes without a prescription** to customers age 18 and older, and **allows adults to purchase** and possess syringes for personal use when acquired from an authorized source.
- Removes the prior limit of 30 syringes.

What we're doing

- Primary goal:
Increase the number of pharmacies in California that sell syringes without a prescription in order to prevent the spread of HIV and viral hepatitis
- And second:
Find out who provides nonprescription syringe sale and get that information to customers

Surveys, surveys, and more surveys...

- Goals:
 - To gather information regarding California pharmacy practice
 - To create pharmacy databases that can be distributed to California counties
- Main counties: Riverside, Orange and San Diego
- Results so far...





“I may not be the best person in the world, but I never stole from anyone and I never hurt anyone. I’m just trying to take care of myself, the way they say you’re supposed to, but the pharmacist treated me like I wasn’t even worth talking to...”



Internal
planning
group

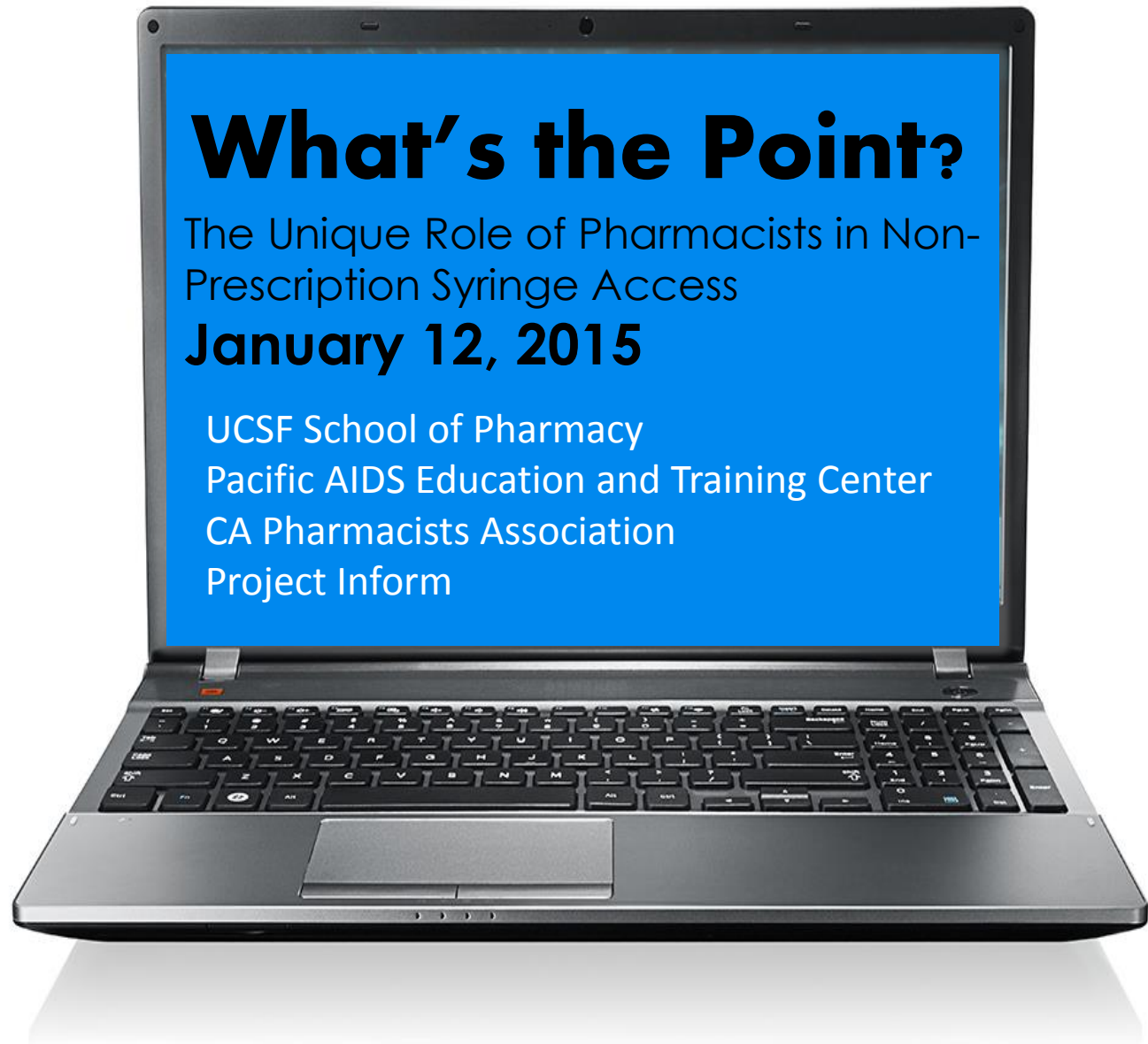
External
collaboration

What's the Point?

The Unique Role of Pharmacists in Non-
Prescription Syringe Access

January 12, 2015

UCSF School of Pharmacy
Pacific AIDS Education and Training Center
CA Pharmacists Association
Project Inform



Patient Information Sheet

PATIENT INFORMATION

WHAT CONSUMERS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SHARPS DISPOSAL

December, 2014

What you need to know about hypodermic needles and syringes and how to dispose of them.

California law allows pharmacies to sell hypodermic needles and syringes to adults age 18 and older without a prescription.¹ Adults anywhere in the state can also possess needles and syringes for personal use if they are provided by a pharmacy, doctor, or by an authorized syringe exchange program.²

Starting January 1, 2015, pharmacy law changed to remove limits on the number of syringes that adults can purchase and possess. There are now no limits on the number of syringes an adult can have or buy. The new law also removes limits on the number of syringes that can be sold. Pharmacists and physicians now can choose how many syringes to provide or sell.

Needles and syringes need to be disposed of safely after they have been used – they can't legally be thrown in the garbage. Ask your pharmacist whether they sell or provide "sharps containers." Sharps containers are made of strong, puncture-proof plastic.

You can't put a sharps container in the garbage or recycling. Sharps containers have to be taken to a location that knows how to handle them safely. Call 1-800-CLEANUP (253- 2687) and search for "syringes" to find a location near you.

What to "Do" for Disposal:

- Use a container that is made for disposing of needles. Ask your pharmacy if they carry sharps containers.
- Immediately put used needles and syringes into your container with the point first.
- Keep the container closed between uses.
- Keep containers away from children and pets.
- Find out where to dispose of your full container(s) at 1-800-CLEANUP (253-2687).

The "Don'ts" of Disposal:

- Don't throw needles in the garbage, even if they are in a container. Containers can break in the garbage and needles can be a safety risk to sanitation workers.
- Don't flush needles down the toilet.
- Don't put sharps in aluminum cans, milk cartons, or any other containers that are not puncture-proof.

How do I find...?

For syringe disposal information call 1-800-CLEANUP or go to <http://search.earth911.com/>.

For drug and alcohol treatment information call 1-800-662-4357.

For HIV and hepatitis testing and treatment call 1-800-662-4357 or go to <http://www.cdcpin.org/ca/>.

For more information about access to sterile syringes go to <http://cdph.ca.gov/syringeaccess>.

¹ CA Business & Professions Code Section 4145.5

- www.cdph.ca.gov/syringeaccess
- Meets statutory requirements
- Can be customized

What can LHJs do?

- Revive (or start) pharmacy recruitment efforts
- Provide local referrals for customers
- Sharps containers
- Talk with regional rep from chains




AB 1743 (Ting)

- Permits licensed pharmacies throughout California to **sell or furnish syringes without a prescription** to customers age 18 and older, and **allows adults to purchase and possess** syringes for personal use when acquired from an authorized source.
- Removes the prior limit of 30 syringes.

Outreach to Law Enforcement

- Differs from city to city and county to county
- Most successful through lobbyist or local health department

DEPARTMENT BULLETIN

A
15-006
01/06/15

Hydrometric Syringe Access and Disposal Programs

The San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFPDHP) continues to fund Syringe Access and Disposal Programs. There are several programs that operate services throughout the city. Included in this bulletin is a list of programs, locations and schedules.

Members should be aware that the syringe program is a place where injection drug users bring their used syringes and access sterile equipment. Many injection drug users do not visit a site themselves and instead have a friend or partner access services for them. With individual may be carrying multiple syringes to or from a site as they are accessing services for multiple persons.

Members should use discretion when they encounter possible syringe program participants and are advised that the intent of the Department is not to interfere with the program.

Members shall not confiscate syringes, alcohol wipes, naloxone, biohazard waste containers, or other sterile injection equipment, at or near access and disposal sites.

When in doubt, members should ask a supervisor to respond to the scene to ensure the policy is followed.

In 1993, San Francisco began funding syringe access after a local state of emergency was declared because of the HIV epidemic. SFPDHP funds organizations to provide access to syringes, alcohol wipes, biohazard waste containers, as well as other sterile injection equipment to reduce the transmission of bloodborne viruses such as HIV and Hepatitis C. In addition, because overdose is the leading cause of death among injection drug users, SFPDHP supports overdose prevention by providing take-home prescriptions of naloxone.


On January 1, 2006, Governor Schwarzenegger signed Assembly Bill (AB) 136. The bill amends previous legislation to allow counties and cities to authorize syringe programs in their jurisdictions without the necessity to declare a state of local emergency.

Beginning January 1, 2015, licensed pharmacists have the discretion to sell hydrometric needles and syringes to adults age 18 and older without a prescription to reduce the spread of HIV, hepatitis C, and other blood-borne diseases. There is **no longer any limit** on the number of needles and syringes that an adult may purchase and possess. These changes to California law were made by Assembly Bill 1743 (1111, Chapter 331, Statutes of 2014).

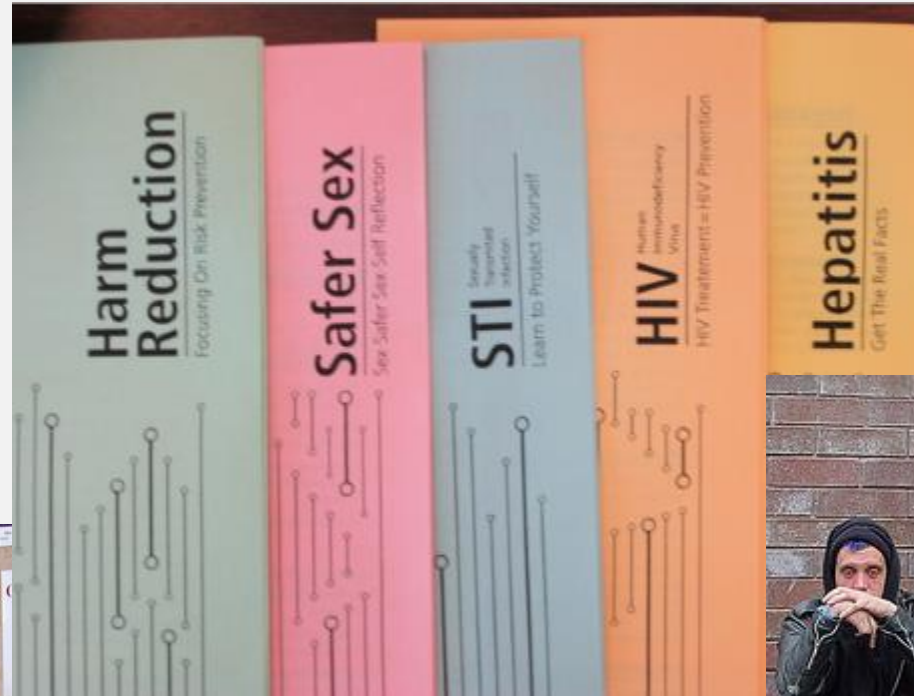
California also specifies that pharmacists, physicians and syringe exchange programs are all authorized sources for nonprescription syringes for disease prevention purposes.

Each syringe program site coordinator has an identification card readily available to present to any police officer. These identification cards are printed on bright yellow paper with red lettering.

Please direct questions about the programs to Wilson Loughran, Community Liaison, Community Health Equity & Promotion Branch, San Francisco Department of Public Health at (415) 437-6218. Each program supported by the SFPDHP will have a copy of this bulletin.


GREGORY P. SUHR
Chief of Police

Getting information to customers



Alessandra Ross

Injection Drug Use Specialist

alessandra.ross@cdph.ca.gov

916-449-5796

www.cdph.ca.gov/syringeaccess

